

## CEREMONIES AT SEED TIME.

In common with the Burmese and Siamese, the Malays have a superstitious belief in the power exerted by the spirits of the earth and air and of the sun and moon in furthering the growth of *padi*. This is especially evinced in the propitiatory invocations which they resort to, and the offerings which they lay upon the ground or scatter in the air at seed time. Of the invocations given below, the first two, with their renderings, are taken from a work \* by Captain LOW, Superintendent of Province Wellesley under the East India Company in 1836, and the remainder, which I have obtained from Malays in Penang, are in common use up to the present time in the Straits Settlements and throughout the Malay Peninsula. They are known as "*Puji padi*" or "propitiation of the *padi*." The first is to Dangomala and Dangomali, spirits of the sun and moon :—

*Sri Dangomala, Sri Dangomali !*  
*Handak kirim anak sambilan bulan ;*  
*Sagala inang, sagala pengasoh ;*  
*Jangan bri sakit, jangan bri demam ;*  
*Jangan bri ngilu dan pëning*  
*Kechil menjadi besar ;*  
*Tuah jadi muda ;*  
*Yang ta'kechap di per kechap ;*  
*Yang ta'sama di per sama ;*  
*Yang ta'hijau di per hijau ;*  
*Yang ta'tinggi di per tinggi ;*  
*Hijau seperti ayer laut ;*  
*Tinggi seperti Bukit Kaf.*

O illustrious spirits of the sun and moon !  
 Let there be fruit (offspring) nine months hence.

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\* "A Dissertation on the Soil and Agriculture of the British Settlement of Penang, &c." by Captain JAMES LOW of the Madras Army, in civil charge of Province Wellesley and Corresponding Member of the Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, &c.—Printed at the Singapore Free Press Office, 1836.

O royal nurses all preserve it from sickness and fever, vertigo and headache.

May it reach the full stature.

May the old become young again.

Where backward may it become forward.

Where unequal may it be made equal.

Where colourless may it become green.

Where short may it become long.

Green as the waters of the Ocean.

High as the mountains of Kaf.

The second is a hyperbolical description of each of the nine months during which the grain is coming to maturity; the tenth, or harvest time, is compared with the birth of Mohamed, and the incantation closes with a prayer for an abundant crop:—

*Bintang mara chuacha limpat ;*

*Ka-dua limpat di langit ;*

*Ka-tiga limpat di bumi ;*

*Ka-empat ayer sambayang ;*

*Ka-lima pintu mazahap ;*

*Ka-anam pintu rezuki ;*

*Ka-tujuh pintu mahaligei ;*

*Ka-dilapan pintu shurga ;*

*Ka-sambilan anak di-kandung ibu ;*

*Ka-säpuluh Mahomed jadi.*

*Jadi säkilian jadi.*

*Bayan Allah didalam rongga batu.*

*Lagi ada rezuki ;*

*Deri hulu deri hilir*

*Saref mengaref ;*

*Deri sina ka daksina*

*Manghantar rezuki*

*Bertambah bertambun.*

The gloriously resplendent stars lighting the firmament are the first;

The full refulgence is the second;

The fullness spreading over the earth is the third—causing abundance;

The fourth, the blessed waters, harbingers of fertility ;

The fifth the four gates of the world, pouring out plenty.

The sixth is the door to the abundance of food ;

The seventh is the portal of the palace ;

The eighth the floor of Surga or Heaven ;

The ninth the pregnant mother ;

The tenth (*i. e.*, the harvest) month the birthday of Mahomed (the luckiest day of the year) ;

May all prove prosperous.

May dry grain prosper.

May the hand of the Almighty appear in the filling of the husk, as the hole in a rock is shut up by degrees.

From above, from below, let plenty always flow,

From East and West may abundance ever increasing pour in.

The next is an invocation of the earth spirit Noh and Dewa Imbang, a sprite of air :—

*Hei! Noh yang dalam bumi,  
Dewa Imbang deri udara,  
Anak saraja jin ketala bumi,  
Yang memegang bumi.*

Hail! Noh who dwellest within the earth!  
And thou Imbang who art ruler in the air,  
Son of the spirit who rules the folds of earth,  
Who guardest with thy power the gates of earth.

The last is an invocation to Setia Guni, an earth spirit, and contains the poetical idea that the grain is surrendered like a dear child to a tender foster mother by its parent who will come to claim it back after six months have passed :—

*Hei Tuanku Setia guni  
Yang memegang bumi tujuh lapis  
Aku bertarohkan anak aku  
Sri Chinta rasa chukup dengan inang  
Pengasoh kanda manda itu*

*Sampei lima bulan kã-anam  
 Aku datang mengambil balik  
 Jangan angkau bagi rasa binasa  
 Chachat chelah inilah upah-kan mu.*

Hail! lord *Setia Guni*,  
 Who dost rule the seven-fold earth,  
 I herewith lay my child upon thy breast,  
 My child the darling of my heart,  
 With his full following of nurses and attendants,  
 And when the fifth moon wanes unto the sixth  
 I shall come to claim him back again.  
 Let him taste no harm or evil, great or small,  
 Here is thy reward.

The "*upah*" or payment of the services of the spirit, is generally as follows:—

An egg, a bunch of betel-vine leaves, some "*bras kunniet*" (*oryza glutinosa*), some "*bras bertik*" (*i. e.*, the white pulp which exudes from rice grains when roasted), and a "*ketupat*" or little woven basket of cocoa-nut leaves filled with rice.

After this invocation of *Setia Guni* loadfuls of rich are sprinkled on the ground, and the following invocation is then raised to the spirit of the air:—

*Hei! Tuanku Malim kã-raja-an  
 Yang memegang langit tujuh lapis  
 Aku bertarohkan anak aku  
 Sri Chinta rasa, &c. [as in the last.]*

Hail! *Malim*, who dost supremely rule  
 The seven folds of sky,  
 I lay my child in pledge with thee,  
 My child the darling of my heart, &c., &c.

After this the rice is thrown into the air, and the ceremony is complete.

The "*pawangs*," sorcerers or rather "wise men" who are skilled in these incantations, are in great request at the sowing of the padi crop.

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